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THE GENTLEMAN ON MY LEFT.

SOME twelve months ago, I attended a public dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern, London. The object of the dinner was to do honour to a distinguished Englishman; the price of tickets, one guinea; the attendance, in number about two hundred. Some persons find a relish in describing old dinners, and eating them over again in imagination; but this is a sort of chewing the cud very distasteful to me. I do not propose, then, to revive the dinner, but to direct attention to the gentleman who sat on my left, and his extraordinary revelations.

His age was about five-and-thirty; his manner, singularly easy and self-possessed, shewed me from the first that his experience of public dinners was more extensive than mine. He was irreproachably dressed, and I do not grudge describing him as a handsome man.

During the pauses of dinner, we conversed. The commonplaces with which we began were distinguished, on his part, by critical remarks on the arrangement of the table, with which he found much fault, and the bad service of the waiters; on mine, by a humble acquiescence in a judgment I felt to be matured by much longer study of such things than my own. I then hazarded another commonplace, to the effect that I concluded him to be a great admirer of the distinguished guest to whom we were doing honour. O dear, no—not at all; he certainly had heard his name, but had no idea what he was celebrated for.

I ventured to ask, apologising if the question were out of place, why he had paid a guinea to be present at a dinner to a man he knew nothing about.

'I attend here professionally,' he explained, and immediately became absorbed with his knife and fork. I turned over in my mind all the professional capacities in which a person may attend a dinner—the Press, Music, Toastmaster—and then tackled him again. No, he was not a member of the press, nor musical; and toastmaster, of course, he was obviously not.

Was my friend (whom, for convenience, I will call Mr Blain) of the medical, clerical, or legal professions? He might have belonged to any one of them from his appearance and manner.

'O no,' he replied, with something of wounded dignity at the bare idea.

I admit being inquisitive, and I had made up my mind I *would* know what he was, but to all my inquiries he simply answered No. I then confided to him my own occupation, and by rather recklessly talking about myself and my own affairs, sought to merit his confidence in return. But he was obdurate. Dessert passed—toasts passed—speeches were said and done. Mr Blain rose to go. He said: 'You tell me you are stopping at the *Charing Cross Hotel*; so am I. We may as well share a cab.'

It was in the cab Mr Blain first intrusted me with the nature of his profession. Although peculiarly abstemious at the table, the toasts he had drunk just served to make him communicative. I was utterly confounded when he said: 'My calling, as you seem curious to know, is that of *Waiter*. I take a high rank in that profession. Allow me to offer you my card; and should you at any time—you will know where to get something done in style, and not as you have seen it to-night.—You wonder at my paying a guinea to attend a dinner? Understand, then, that I make it part of my business to attend dinners privately, in case I may pick up a hint, for I don't despise learning from inferiors. I could never keep pace with the times but for seeing the latest fashions in waiting as interpreted by others, however humble their position may be to mine. If I learn nothing else, I always, in a private capacity, discover some want which I can in future supply. To-night, the waiting was highly inartistic, and discreditable to the profession; but its very omissions are instructive to me. Look at the napkins, for example. Dis-grace-ful! If there is one thing more than another in which a man of talent may display the resources of a cultivated mind, it is napkins. What did we have? Only five styles, continually repeated, and those the

very commonest, familiar to a benighted Boots—the single mitre, the boat, canoe, shoe, and slipper. How the public endures it at a guinea dinner puzzles me. That is my style at two-and-six per head. At a guinea dinner for one hundred persons, I give one hundred different designs in napkins, all of them artistic—tulip, lily, rose, *fleur-de-luce*, fountain, the five orders of architecture, pheasant, double mitre, and so on. Then, for the Chair and the Vice, the double fan, the finest conception of a napkin extant. I never saw the man who could fold the double fan quicker than I. It takes me half an hour, every minute of it; and will fold two out of three for a wager. When I say two out of three, I mean you can't always depend upon the laundress. You must have a yard-and-a-quarter napkin, starched as stiff as pasteboard, to turn out a work of art, and you can seldom get them starched up to it. A professional man would not risk his reputation by attempting to fold more than two out of three, not even if he is acquainted with the laundress.

The cab stopped. I took out my purse. 'O dear, no; allow me, if you please,' said Mr Blain. He insisted on satisfying the cabman, and then invited me to his rooms to take a cigar. The apartments he occupied were some of the best in the hotel. Divining my surprise at the sumptuousness of his quarters, Mr Blain proceeded: 'You have no doubt been under the impression that as a class we are poorly paid. Our services are perhaps not recognised by a grateful public as they deserve, especially when attendance is charged in the bill; but it is a very poor head-waiter's place at a first-class country hotel that does not bring in three hundred a year. For my own part, I don't boast, but my income as a waiter is about eight hundred a year in a provincial town. My wages are a pound a week. Don't misunderstand me. The balance is not perquisites. I reckon hotel perquisites at not more than a couple of hundred. But let me explain, by telling you a little about myself.

'The *Golden Lion* is the oldest hotel in our town, a posting-house. We get good families stopping with us, and we have the town-club meeting there. I went to the *Golden Lion* ten years ago, as second-waiter. That's a bad berth. Suppose, now, you are a family, just come into our hotel. Our first-waiter comes and bows to you, shews you your apartments, and rings for me to wait on you. I attend you till the bill is wanted, then I have to fetch the head-waiter, who receives your money, and pockets all the pickings. It's hard lines on me, the second-waiter, as I look at it with a second-waiter's eyes, but not so when regarded from the position of first-waiter. You see, everybody must learn, and pay for learning. As head-waiter, you are responsible for everything, and have to teach everything to your junior, so it's only fair you should take what little there is to take, regarding it as a premium from an apprentice.

'You may think there's very little to learn in waitering; but then you don't know. In the first place, it takes a man five years at least to learn how to lay a cloth. No one has ever been known to do it under, not as it should be done. Let me see a man once put a cloth on a table, and I'll tell you to a year how long he has been in the profession, only by his knack of doing it. And when he lays the knives and forks, I can tell you how he keeps his pantry in order. Then there is the acquiring

of an even temperament. No apprenticeship will ever teach that, except you have a natural gift for the profession. Whatever is said at table, you must take no notice. If your dinner-table, or family, as it may be, is in a roar of laughter, you must look like a mute at a funeral. If they were to describe an earthquake that has just taken place in the next room, it mustn't shock you, or disturb your unruffled countenance. Again, think of the strain upon the intellect. Take, for example, a public dinner, like to-night. One waiter to every ten persons. That waiter has to calculate to a nicety exactly how much every one of his people has eaten and drunk, and exactly what every one will want next. He has ten appetites on his mind in different stages of repletion, and his profession as a waiter is to forestall every want with such tact that no one shall ever ask him for anything, I mean no one of good taste or cultivated appetite, for there are people we unfortunately have to do with will bellow out: "Waiter, more soup," instead of lifting a finger to indicate their vulgar requirements. Of course we are not responsible for such unseemly exhibitions of depravity; but, in any other case, for a waiter to be asked for anything is sufficient to ruin him for life. I knew a waiter once, a most exemplary man, who had the reputation of having never forgotten a single requisite of the table. A gentleman once rang for him—"Waiter, there are no salt-spoons." He looked round, and saw it was too true. He said he would go and get them. He went—where to, nobody ever knew—it might have been to London—or it might have been into the river—his reputation was gone, and his body was never found, but he never sent for his clothes, which shewed he was either dead, or else so ashamed of himself that he would have liked to be.

'But these are trifles on the very threshold of the profession. When you get to be a head-waiter, you find how difficult it is to make the public part with its coin, in a copious manner, for gratuities, without becoming ill-tempered. A young hand fails to impress the public with that sense of the total indifference to silver which a master of the profession will render respectfully apparent without saying a word. A young hand trusts to his tongue: "Please to remember the waiter"—the public parts to the amount of half-a-crown, and growls. An old hand never asks for money, but makes the public feel as if it were cast away on a desolate island, without a friend or any means of communication with the outside world, except through the person of a very gentlemanly and superior being, who first makes them alive to their abject dependence on his pleasure by coy neglect, and then, by ministering to their wants at the last moment, appears to them in the light of a deliverer. It takes a deal of study to learn how to awe the public, and make the public feel its inferiority, and to know the exact moment to exchange your policy of neglectful indifference for one of condescending readiness to oblige before aggravation sets in. But once make the public feel its obligation, the public, if gentlemanly, will "part" freely. If not so disposed (and you can tell in two minutes after they come in the house), you abandon them to the second-waiter, or third if refractory, and never deliver them from his ignorant inattention.

'I worked my way on till I was appointed club-waiter. I got a young hand to take the public-room, billiard, and reading-room, and as I knew

pretty well the average takings for gratuities in those rooms, I was able to keep a sharp eye on him. When I thought he robbed me less than usual, I would give him a shilling or two for his honesty. These rooms brought me a pound a week. My own attention was confined to the card-room; that was good for four to five pounds a week certain—not every week alike, mind you, but one week with another.—How so? I'll tell you, and you will know why I never missed the card-room bell.

'The members would sit card-playing in perfect silence—not a word spoken for hours. Whenever I saw an empty glass, I filled it; never asking for the money lest I should disturb the play. I made it my business to know what every member drank, and to supply him with that. It was my duty to tell them when it was twelve o'clock. I would respectfully do so, when a rubber was over. "Draw the curtains, Henry, so that the light don't shine through those cursed shutters; put out the gas all over the house; lock the front door; and go to your pantry."

'Down I would go, and sleep till three or four in the morning, when my gentlemen would always wake me up, so that I shouldn't get into a scrape; and they always paid half-a-crown, and sometimes a crown apiece for waiting for them. The winners (as is generally the case with gainers at cards, "light come, light go," you know) were particularly generous. Thus my perquisites as club-waiter would run to two hundred and fifty per annum, and my wages another fifty.

'I might have done very well at that, but it was not improving myself in the profession of waiting in its higher branches of cloth-laying as I could wish. So, when the head-waiter was compelled to leave, owing to a misunderstanding with one of the ladies of the kitchen, I took his place. In that position I devoted myself to the acquirement of every trick and wrinkle which could place me on a level with the most eminent waiters in the kingdom. I have never grudged a guinea to a Frenchman or a German who could shew me how to do a new figure in napkins, or a novelty in arrangement of fruit and flowers. By dint of study and judicious feeling, and patience, and observing the blunders of other waiters, and correcting them in practice, I have gained the reputation of being the first waiter in all the counties south of London. You may talk of the beauties of scenery, of handsome pictures, of fine statues—I never could see anything in any of them to compare with the beauty of a cloth well laid for a grand dinner—I don't care whether it's my laying or another man's; I can give others credit for artistic ability when I see it. If any man who has got glass, and silver, and flowers to arrange on snow-white linen, and can put the dessert on the table at the same time, can't make a picture out of his work, he has no soul for the highest walks of art. I would recommend him, as a friend, to go into the church, or take to painting or literature—or to any kindred employment which may be congenial to his intellect.

'After the dessert has been removed, and the waiters are dismissed to their pantry to wash the silver, if the head-waiter, remaining with his one or two assistants behind the screen, in case anything is wanted, can lay his hand on his waistcoat and say he has not been asked for a single thing, he is a proud and a happy man. Such has been

my blissful lot for many years. With that fiendish invention, "Attendance charged in the bill," the palmy days of the profession may be said to have departed. It is a most monstrous infringement on our ancient rights and privileges. A gentleman comes—as it may be yourself—stays eight days at our hotel, sees in the bill: "Attendance at three-and-sixpence per day, twenty-eight shillings." "Really, waiter," he says, "I can't give you anything in the face of this charge." "No, sir," I have replied; "it isn't to be expected; and I am so ashamed of the practice, I would scorn to take a fee from you; though I feel it right to state the waiter never receives a farthing of the money charged for attendance." This is mostly good for a crown, and besides, is really true. We don't get the money, so we have to make it up in other ways. It was partly from feeling that I should have to descend to many unprofessional means of eking out my salary, and partly that I felt I was wasting my abilities at an hotel, that made me leave the *Golden Lion*, and set up as a professional man on my own account.

'Our town is a large one, and great upon public dinners. The neighbouring towns are also large, and likewise great upon public dinners. I had become so well known in the town and neighbourhood as the waiter *par excellence*, that I had no fear of a dinner going into other hands. No one else could lay a dinner fit for those who had once been accustomed to my laying. I was not disappointed. Engagements fell in on all sides, so that I soon made about four hundred a year. Dissatisfied with this pittance, I bethought me of the scheme by which I raised my income to its present amount, which, as I tell you, is eight hundred per annum. I caused it to be known by private intimation through a dozen counties, that the only thoroughly qualified professional man as a waiter in the south of England was prepared to attend all public dinners, with a staff of competent assistants, *entirely free of charge*. The only stipulation I made was that I should have the care of the gentlemen's hats and greatcoats. This privilege is worth to me five of the eight hundred a year, all expenses paid, of which I speak.—You may stare, but it is true. Take the average of the year, I attend as many as three dinners a week in the twelve counties in question. Every gentleman who comes in to dinner has his hat and greatcoat respectfully taken from him by one of my assistants, ticketed, and placed on the oak pegs which form part of my movable stock in trade. He receives a duplicate ivory ticket. At the conclusion of the dinner, his hat and coat are courteously returned him on delivery of the ticket. *No charge whatever is made for the accommodation*. I find by careful study that, if it is left entirely to the generosity of gentlemen to give what they like, the average amount so given, take one with another, at a public dinner, for the care of a hat or coat, amounts to eightpence per head. If I were to charge this for the service, they would complain. If they were forced to pay a fixed sum *before* dinner, sixpence would look dear; but I find eightpence so accurately represents the appeal to the generosity of gentlemen after dinner, that I can tell to a very close shave if my assistants rob me. Shillings preponderate, of course; but the half-crowns tell up. About one person and a half give shillings to one who gives a half-crown, and that allows for one or two here and there who

meanly remark: "No charge? oh, thanks!" and sneak off without giving so much as a copper.

'I was at the banquet to Her Majesty's ministers at X. Thirteen hundred sat down. I took a hundred and nine pounds hats and coats.

'The balance of the eight hundred per annum is made up by an extensive private practice among the nobility and county gentry, where my name is a sufficient guarantee that the table will be an artistic display. And, as you have seen, I occasionally attend dinners in a private capacity, to keep myself informed of the latest novelties.

'For all this, I am not well to do. I never save money.—What is my weakness? The weakness of the profession—horse-racing, and betting on it. I take long odds, and hedge before the event, on every horse that will rise. I make a book, so that I always stand to win in any case except some very unforeseen combination of circumstances should arise; but, somehow, such unforeseen combination of circumstances does very frequently arise, and the result is that I lose. I mean to give over betting, though, as soon as I have made just one *comp* that shall land me what I've lost, and then I think I shall sell my hat-and-coat business to a Limited Liability Company, and retire on the proceeds.'

With that I wished Mr Blain good-night.

A PERFECT TREASURE.

CHAPTER VII.—MRS BLUNT AND I AND SOMEBODY.

THE event recorded in the last chapter was not without its effect even upon my youthful and elastic mind; it convinced me that, in some way or other, the fortunes of my dear uncle and myself were knit up with one whom I could not but consider a most unworthy object; and I felt degraded by the connection between us and him. The shadow of the mystery of our little household cast a gloom over me, that all Uncle Theo's kindness could not dispel. Far from reproaching me with the conduct which had, without doubt, been the immediate cause of Tannajee's flight, he seemed to redouble his attempts to make Hershell Point a happy home for me; but this was only heaping coals of fire on my head. He was ill; his exertions upon that inclement night had told upon a constitution unaccustomed to our English winters: although he looked as strong and as noble as ever, he had a cough, which never left him night or day; and when he coughed, I shuddered. Unreasoning, impulsive, full of presentiments for evil or for good, I already saw my benefactor slain by the consequences of my own foolish passion. Tannajee was as well as ever, grumbling whenever called upon to attend to his sick master; silent, but scowling, as respected myself, though I was as civil to him as though he were my brother. It was the most unhappy time I had experienced; yet a gleam of sunshine suddenly struck in upon me, which warmed me to the core. It may seem nothing to many of my readers, but a few will understand it. It caused me sensations, compared with which those of mere material success in life are feeble, and even the dawns of first-love.

One morning, there arrived by the post no less than a dozen newspapers, all directed to Marmaduke Drake, Esq. They were duplicate sheets of the *Sandford Mercury*, a periodical the circumstances of which did not enable it to offer pecuniary

reward to its contributors, but which remunerated them for their services, besides increasing its own modest circulation, by sending them twelve copies of their works in type. My *Lines to —* had actually been published; I was in print at last. How shall I describe to that now comparatively small portion of the public that does not write for glory or for greed what emotions were mine, what being in print means to the sucking author! What type can typify type itself? which is his *summum bonum*. I may say of it what a lover of music said to his pianoforte:

No fairy casket full of bliss outvalues thee;

Love only awakened with a kiss more sweet may be.

But I knew nothing about Love at present, and it seemed to me that I had reached the very goal of happiness.

I gave a copy of the *Mercury* to Martha; one to the maid-of-all-work, Nancy; and even one to Sangaree Tannajee, although he could not read a line of English, and not unnaturally set down my generosity as only another instance to be added to the long category of insults he imagined himself to have received at my hands. He managed to find out what was the particular attraction to me in the paper in question, and lit a cheroot in my presence with my deathless lines. As to my uncle, I gave him three copies; thus only retaining half-a-dozen duplicates for my own private delectation. The provincial printer had made about as many mistakes as there were lines in the poem, and though I corrected them carefully in each case, my heart bled to think what a false impression must be made on those hundreds of readers who saw, for instance, 'posture' in the place of 'pasture,' and 'silver forks' in that of 'silver frost.' It is not my intention to inflict upon the public those early (or later) productions, under which my kind-hearted editress suffered so patiently, but still I feel I owe it to my genius to set it right with the world in this particular case, wherein it has been so sadly misrepresented. The *Lines to —*, too, were in fact addressed to Mrs Eleanor Blunt, and have therefore some general interest—or rather they did have at that time, for the great reputation of that charming writer has faded with each revolving year, and the present generation of readers worships other literary gods. At all events, the poem will give a fair idea of my quality as a verse-writer at the age of sixteen, or (by our Lady) nigh seventeen, and may so far serve to illustrate this little life-story. Looking back at it through these many, many years, it really seems to me to have some touches of grace about it; and certes I could write no such sonnet now, were it to save my life.

LINES TO —, ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

Dear Lady, and kind friend, my love to thee
(But tell not thou the lady of my love*);
Through all this New-Year's Day be blue above,
And silver frost + on earth; from tree to tree
The wreathed diamonds we poets see,
And all the country round which thou hast made
Thine own, and ours—heath, pasturemead, and
glade—
As thy glad heart would have it, so may't be!
A happy year; a new year rich in good

* I need scarcely say that this was only a gallant conceit.

+ Imagine my feelings at 'silver forks' in place of this!

(For so I know to thee the happiest year);
Amid the poor, less frowns and better cheer;
And more like thee, to teach as teachers should,
Who, coming across my heart this Christmas-time,
Of love and graciousness could scarce escape a
rhyme.

I must honestly confess that I do not think my uncle understood one word of all this, any more than Martha, or Nancy, or Tannajee; and that even if I had left uncorrected those infamous misprints, he would hardly have discovered their inappropriateness. But he was pleased to see me so pleased, and put his three copies of the *Sandiford Mercury* religiously away in his desk, as a sacred though mysterious treasure. Being informed, however, that the poem referred to Mrs Eleanor Blunt, he quite agreed with me that I should start at once to lay that offering at her feet in person; and for Seaview Cottage I accordingly set forth with a beating heart. I am sure no lover who bears a present to his mistress ever pictured to himself her pleasure at receiving it, with brighter tints than those with which I painted my kind friend's satisfaction at what I had produced for her, from the depth of my heart and by the sweat of my brain. Nor was I disappointed with its reception. Mrs Eleanor Blunt was charmed (or she had a very charming way of persuading me so) with my little act of homage.

Even great authors, and especially authoresses, are mortal; and, perhaps touched with my simple flattery, she let her personal feelings tinge her judgment; but unquestionably she henceforth expressed a higher opinion of my literary promise. She did not now think it so much too soon to aid me to venture into print, since I had already got there without her help—although it must be confessed that the *Sandiford Mercury* was not a journal of European reputation; and we took counsel together as to how the thing should be done.

For my own part, notwithstanding this recent gleam of success, I was rather tired of being rejected by editors, who had shewn themselves worse than even the unjust judge in the Scripture, who was overcome by importunity; and Mrs Blunt, on her side, was not perhaps desirous to ask any personal favour of them on my account. 'I know So-and-so, and So-and-so,' said she, naming the conductors of some very first-class magazines indeed, to which even my ambition had not aspired; 'but I know so well what their cut-and-dried replies would be: "Your young friend must fill his basket first;" and so on. Besides, although it does no hurt to an old hand like me, magazine-writing spoils the style. I tell you what you shall do, my dear—what, at all events, will prove that you have patience, a quality indispensable to one of your proposed calling—you shall write a three-volume novel.'

This idea transported me; I could have sat down and begun at once.

'This will take you a year at least,' mused she (my countenance fell); 'and then, at eighteen, you will have entirely to rewrite it.' (It might have almost been written in my face, it became so blank.) 'Then, with a few hints from me, and some corrections, you will most likely be able to get some publisher to bring it out at his own risk, or even pay you something for it; but money will be a very secondary consideration; the point is to place yourself before the public. If the book has any worth at all, you will then have a little

reputation to trade upon, and the magazines will be glad enough to get you.'

I have no doubt I still looked the reverse of enraptured with this tardy scheme.

'Such is my advice, my dear,' continued the old lady firmly; 'and it should not be unpalatable to one who really believes that he has got something in him. If you find yourself able to make an income, however small, by literature by the time you are nineteen, you ought to be more than satisfied. As it is, I am stretching a point to please you, for readers prefer seasoned brains; and any less prejudiced mentor would, I am certain, postpone your public appearance at least until you are one-and-twenty. There is no case in which the line "Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay," more exactly applies than to the literary aspirant. Indeed, were your own circumstances less exceptional than they are, you would have found me much more unrelenting.'

'I daresay you advise me for the best,' murmured I, endeavouring to look grateful.

'I am sure of it, my dear,' said the old lady quietly. 'But unfortunately, in these affairs, one can give nothing but advice. You must help yourself, if you wish Heaven to help you. Young people less sensible than you, but bitten by the same mad dog, have often come to me for ideas, for plots, for literary material of all sorts. Now, that's absurd: every author is bound to find (or steal) his own materials; not to mention that when I happen to get possession of an idea, I do assure you I keep it for myself.'

'I have got a plot,' said I, raising my head for the first time.

'Of course you have, my dear; half-a-dozen of them; and mind you take great pains to select the best. When you have written twenty chapters—that is, in about six months hence—you may come here (if I am alive), and read them to me.—You see,' added she, smiling, 'what I am content to suffer for your sake.'

'You are very good to me, dear Mrs Blunt; and I am a sad thankless fellow,' said I earnestly. 'However, I will obey your bidding to the letter.'

'There's a good boy.—Now, let us "sink the shop." Tell me all that's going on at Hershell.'

'Well, madam, my uncle (of whom, if I had been less egotistical, I should have spoken before) is far from being in his usual health.'

'What! the Maharajah ill? I should not have thought that possible! He looks to me like one who would maintain all his energies till about ninety-five, and then suddenly die in his bed.—How did he manage to get out of health?'

Then little by little, and very unwillingly, I found myself telling Mrs Blunt, who was a perfect sleuth-hound after a mystery, and delighted in it above everything, all I knew about Sangaree Tannajee and my uncle, but under the strictest seal of secrecy. It had not been actually enjoined upon me to be silent on the matter, and I really felt it a great relief to unbosom myself to such a sympathising friend. She listened with the utmost interest, and when I concluded with, 'All that I feel certain about in the matter is, that whatever hold this wretched Hindu has upon his master, it does not arise from anything of which my uncle need be ashamed,' she only nodded assent, and sat staring at the fire.

'I am too old to be astonished at anything,' said

Mrs Blunt presently; 'but certainly what you tell me is very remarkable. Now, if my friend, Mr Edgar Allan Poe, were here (one of the most sagacious men about other people's affairs, and the greatest fool about his own, I know), he would get at the bottom of this mystery before he slept to-night. Let us see; what does your uncle say about this fellow? "I myself may be very rich some day, but it is almost certain you (his nephew) will be so." Then: "I wouldn't lose him for so many thousand pounds;" and again: "We shall never find out his worth until he is gone;" and all the time this "Perfect Treasure of a servant," as he also calls him, is an ill-tempered and idle drunkard, and not even devoted to the master who thus eulogises him. Putting aside the idea of this fellow's having any hold upon your uncle arising from his master's misbehaviour (which I agree with you that we may safely do); still, imprudence often proves quite as strong a snare as vice, or even crime. In some way or other, Sangaree Tannajee has so secure a footing in your household, that no ill conduct can make him lose it. Your uncle evidently estimates him very highly in one sense—doubtless a material one—and yet without entertaining for him a particle of esteem. Now, the question is: How are we to reconcile this inconsistency? How are we to—'

'Madam,' interrupted I hastily, 'we are both wrong; but I am most to blame. If my uncle had intended me to find out the mysterious connection between Tannajee and our own fortunes, he would have revealed it to me himself; on the contrary, he has enjoined me not to open the sealed packet in his desk which contains the solution of this affair until after his death. Is not that equivalent to forbidding me to inquire into the matter at all?'

'Frankly, I think not,' said Mrs Blunt. 'It appears to me that your uncle is under some solemn promise—and indeed any promise would be solemn to a man of his chivalrous nature—to keep silence upon the affair himself; but the very fact of his not having laid a similar injunction upon you, proves that he wishes you to use your freedom. He did not chide you, it seems, for making your own observations upon the Hindu's misconduct, and his master's singular mildness towards him. He would have said, had he wished you to be gagged and bound like himself: "For the future, whatever you may observe in my servant's behaviour or in mine, you need take no notice." Do you see what I mean?'

'Yes,' said I; 'and I should like to believe it. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to discover this secret, and thereby possibly set free my uncle from the trammels in which he is certainly involved. But my own idea is, that the mystery, whatever it may be, is so obscure, so altogether sunk in the past, that my uncle, himself a simple and incurious man, believes it to be wholly incapable of solution, except by the key that lies within that packet, and which he is justly convinced I would as soon cut off my hand as make use of before the time appointed. He acts with the same consciousness of safety as a man who lets his private desk lie about the house, since it is fastened by one of those letter-padlocks, the "open sesame" of which it would take a lifetime to discover by trial. At the same time, since the necessary combination might just, within the range of possibility, be hit upon by accident, he

would not wish the children of the house to be trying their luck with it all day.'

'He would tell them not to do so then,' persisted the old lady.

'At all events, my dear Mrs Blunt,' said I gravely, 'I must beg of you—'

Here I was interrupted by the entrance of a servant announcing a name which I did not catch, and ushering in a young lady, who threw herself into the arms of my hostess with affectionate warmth.

'You dear little darling,' cried the latter; 'how glad I am to see you back again! And only to think of your thus flashing in upon me all of a sudden like a sunrise at sea! How dared you do it?—And you—yes, you!—and here the scornful finger of Mrs Eleanor Blunt caused me to blush from head to heel—how dare you, sir, to come from Hershell Point with what you call your news, and never to say a word about my Rosa's return to England?'

CHAPTER VIII.—MISS GLENDELL.

'My Rosa,' as my literary godmother called this unexpected stranger, was a girl of about my own age, dark as an Andalusian, but tall, and so frank-faced, that you could not mistake her for aught but Saxon. Her cheeks, aglow with brisk walking through the frosty air, grew yet more crimson as her attention was thus drawn perforce to me by Mrs Blunt's appeal. I had never seen her before, but I could make a very good guess as to who she was.

'I did not know this young lady was expected so soon at home,' said I, 'far less that she had arrived.—What a pleasant surprise you must have given to your father, Miss Glendell; he has so often spoken about you to my uncle and myself, who are very warm friends of his, you must know;' and I stepped forward and held out my hand with my best air.

She took it without the least embarrassment. 'I have often heard,' said she, 'from Mrs Blunt here, as well as from dear papa, of Mr Marmaduke Drake, and his uncle, the ex-maharajah;' and a sunny smile lit up her glorious Spanish face. Her tones were soft and low, but very distinct. She had the easy grace of a woman of the world of twice her age. For the first time in my life, I felt abashed, confused, and subjugated: she was mistress of herself and me.

'Well, it seems you don't want an introduction to each other, young people,' observed Mrs Blunt, regarding us with a pleasant twinkle of her eyes. 'You must be good friends, you two; you may be of great mutual service to each other; for this young gentleman, Rosa, is in a position to give you lectures on the British Classics, which I dare say you have shamefully neglected while in Frogland; and this young lady, Marmy, can teach you French, besides every modern accomplishment that was ever heard of.—So you are "finished" now, my dear Rosa, are you? A perfect professor of languages and the fine arts, including calisthenics and the use of the globes, eh?'

'Yes, my dear madam; or, at all events, thank goodness, I have done with Paris, and have come home, to be with dear papa a year. He has promised himself that treat, as he calls it, before I go out!—here the young girl hesitated, then added, with particular distinctness, as though ashamed of a weakness she had overcome—'before I go out as a governess, you know.'

I felt myself growing scarlet: the idea of this lovely creature being compelled, at so early an age, to work for her own living, made me quite indignant.

'A year hence will be about the time that you too, Marmy, will be making your first appearance on the stage of life,' observed Mrs Blunt. 'I shall regard your *débuts* with interest, for you have both, in some sort, been my pupils; although you, Rosa, have been so long a truant, that you must have forgotten my instructions years ago.'

'I have not at least forgotten your many kindnesses, dear madam,' replied the young girl affectionately. 'You have no idea, by the by, how useful your letters of introduction have been to me. Madame Boncieux was quite proud of having a pupil in whom so many eminent persons professed themselves interested; and then how good you have been to correspond with me so often, you who have so many calls upon your pen. It is impossible for one to imagine, without having been an exile from home, as I have been, how welcome is the handwriting of a friend!' The speaker's eyes filled with honest tears. Her manner, which had a certain graceful demonstrativeness about it scarcely English, was so inexpressibly touching that I could have wept myself.

'My poor Rosa!' exclaimed Mrs Blunt with tenderness, 'it seems to me your fate has been a hard one.'

'Not at all, dear madam,' replied she cheerfully; 'for I assure you I have been almost always treated with consideration. My aunt, who sent for me to live with her when my poor mother died, was very kind; and when God took her, it was my own wish to go to Madame Boncieux. My dear father would have sent for me home at once; but how could I learn in Hershell village to get my own living? to cease to be a drag upon his efforts? For he is very poor, you know, and is no longer young. If he had had his will, his love would have rendered me useless; he and you would have downright spoiled me; but now, as you say, I have learned to teach everything to everybody;' and for the first time she laughed so merrily as well as musically that it was clear her experience of life, however severe a burden, had not destroyed the elasticity of youth.

'And, with all your fine Parisian ways,' said the old lady, who was obviously as proud of her Rosa as though she had been really her mother, 'you have not forgotten how to walk, it seems. How nice it is of you to have trudged all this way to see me so early.'

'Well, I think it would have been good of me to leave papa,' returned the other smiling; 'but the fact is, he had to go over to Daisypport, to see a patient; and I thought I should just have time to run down and have a kiss of you, and back again, before he returned home.—But I really must bid you good-bye now, for the present; for he is like a child with a new toy, and cannot bear me to be out of his sight.'

'If you must go, dear Rosa, you must; but since you and Marmy live at the same out-of-the-way, end-of-the-world place, you may as well walk home together.'

I blushed, and bowed, murmuring something of the great honour which I should esteem it to be Miss Glendell's escort; while the young girl expressed her pleasure with the arrangement in a much less embarrassed manner. 'Only,' said she,

'I must just say "How do you do?" to Sally, lest she should think I had forgotten her.'

Sally was the cook at Seaview Cottage; and while Miss Glendell sought the kitchen, Mrs Blunt inquired of me whether I did not think her protégée charming.

'Yes, indeed,' said I earnestly. 'But why never have spoken to me of this wonder?'

'Because I wished her to make her own impression upon you,' returned she frankly. 'There's a heroine for your new novel, sir! None of your blue-sashed, bread-and-butter young misses, but a genuine—— Hush! here she comes.—Sally is as fat as ever, is she not?—Almost as fat as her mistress, you were going to say. Well, you were thinking so, at all events; naughty Rosa!—Good-bye, my darling; teach him French.—Good-bye, Marmy; introduce her to the British Classics.—Dear heart alive,' added she with fervour, 'what would I not give to be as young as you two!'

This pleasant old lady, our common friend, of course afforded us a ready subject for conversation; and, besides, there was Rosa's father to talk about, and my uncle, about whom she expressed herself curious to hear. But there was each other's life-history also, concerning which, at seventeen, one is by no means reticent. That of Rosa I was already in part acquainted with from her own lips; and she now completed what was wanting. Having lost her mother at an early age; and her aunt, who lived abroad, volunteering to take charge of her, Mr Glendell had very unselfishly parted with his little daughter, for the sake of her own future benefit. His widowed sister was reported (falsely as it turned out) to be in good circumstances, and it was hoped would make the child her heiress. But she had died poor. Rosa, declining to return home, to be a burden upon her father's scanty resources, had been educating herself for the last three years, with a view to getting her own living as a governess, which she was now fully competent to do. As for me, I spoke of my own affairs with a candour that was half-frankness, half-egotism; and they seemed to interest my new companion mightily. The idea of choosing literature for my profession in life delighted her; much as a young gentleman in the middle ages might have pleased some youthful maiden by the confession that he intended to devote himself to knight-errantry. She had been introduced through Mrs Blunt to some eminent men of letters in France, all decorated with ribbons or crosses, and to whom Madame Boncieux had evinced an unwonted respect; and she esteemed that calling very highly. Even in France, it was exceptional; but in England, save our friend at Seaview Cottage, she had never met with an author. 'How droll!' (this expression I did not quite approve of); 'and had I written much? And was it prose or poetry? She doted on poetry. They read Voltaire's *Henriade* and Lamartine's *Napoleon* at Madame Boncieux'. And were these charming things in manuscript, or were they actually in print? How I blessed the editor of the *Sandiford Mercury*! Twenty-four hours ago, I should have had to confess that I had never written anything that had been published; but now I replied with affected carelessness that 'some of my works were in print, and some were not; nay, it did so happen, by the by, that I had in my pocket at that moment a printed copy—if she would do me the favour to accept it—of some verses addressed to her old friend and mine, Mrs

Eleanor Blunt.' I would not permit her to read them, as she wished to do at once, upon the open road, which I did not consider a favourable spot for their proper appreciation; but when we reached her home, and found the surgeon had not yet returned, the *Sonnet* to — received the most favourable criticism; and I promised, without much pressing, to shew her some more productions by the same hand.

I was already charmed by this beautiful young creature's air and appearance; but now that I had come to know the capabilities of her mind, 'Here,' said I to myself, 'is Perfection indeed!'

When Mr Glendell came home, we found he had been not only to Daisyport; he had called at the Point on his way back, to see the ex-maharajah, upon whom he always now looked in twice or thrice a week.

'You found my uncle better, I trust?' said I, after some talk.

'Well, the fact is, Marmy,' observed the surgeon gravely, 'I am not easy about the ex-maharajah.'

'Good Heaven! sir,' cried I, seizing my hat, 'is my uncle ill?'

'Not in the sense you mean, my lad; he is no worse than he was yesterday, for instance. But strong as he looks, and indeed is, as respects mere vigour, there is something wrong with his lungs, I feel convinced. I have persuaded him to-day, for the first time, to let me use the stethoscope; and the result is far from encouraging.'

'O sir,' said I, turning suddenly pale, and feeling my heart, that had just been beating so blithely, become as cold as a stone, 'must my dear uncle die?'

'Nay, nay; I don't say that there is anything so serious the matter at present; but his constitution, outwardly iron-plated, has a weak spot within—a fact which I believe he has himself long suspected. Whether that be so or not, he received what I thought it my duty to tell him this afternoon with the utmost coolness. His only anxiety is upon your account, Marmy.—What a fine, brave, unselfish fellow he is!'

'Yes, Mr Glendell, and as tender-hearted as any woman.'

'Ay, Marmy, he has been, indeed, as you once told me, mother as well as father to you. Against that, there is nothing to be said, for you have been a good and dutiful lad; but this kindness of heart in him in some cases becomes mere weakness. I protest that the conduct of that Hindu villain, whose life he saved, but at the expense of his own health—for that night's work upon the downs has brought out all the dormant mischief into activity—fairly makes my blood boil. At this moment, that copper-coloured villain is drunk; and your uncle, who needed his attendance, and of course applied for it in vain, has nothing more severe to say than "Poor fellow." It's worse than weakness—it's downright wicked. Why, there are a dozen honest men in this village who would make Mr Braydon good and faithful servants, in place of this lolling heathen, and yet he persists in retaining him. Moreover, what seems so odd, I verily believe your uncle knows him to be a worthless scoundrel. What do you say, Marmy?'

'I don't think Uncle Theo has a very high opinion of him,' said I evasively, for my conscience was still tender concerning the revelation I had already made upon this subject to Mrs Blunt.

'Well, then, why does he keep him? Why does

he put up with him? There must be some uncommonly strong reason for it, you know.'

'I am sure I don't know, Mr Glendell, nor even suspect.'

'Then all I can say is, that you are a very stupid fellow (Don't you think so, Rosey?), to have lived in the same house a dozen years, and never to have discovered the skeleton in the cupboard!'

'Sangaree Tannajee is not much like a skeleton,' said I with a forced laugh, 'as I am sure Miss Rosa will say when she has seen him.'

'It's no laughing matter, Marmy,' pursued the surgeon. 'Setting aside the inconvenience of having such a brute in your house at all, it is just now absolutely necessary that your uncle should be closely looked after and well tended. He is careless of himself, and needs to be reminded to take his medicine, and the nourishing food that has become so necessary to him. Martha and Nancy are well-meaning women enough, but forgetful and boorish. A good body-servant would be, just now, invaluable about your uncle, and instead of that, here is this drunken baboon.'

'If you will only tell me, Mr Glendell, what you wish my uncle to do,' pleaded I, 'I will answer for it nothing shall be forgotten; he need not surely require a servant when I am by his side to minister to his wants. It would be a very small return to make to him for all he has done for me, even should I become his valet and his nurse.'

'My good lad, I know all that,' said the surgeon approvingly; 'but, unfortunately, he would never let you do him any such service; although, from a servant who knows his duties, he might accept it as a matter of course.'

'It seems to me,' said Miss Glendell rising, and putting an arm round her father's neck, 'that this dear ex-maharajah, whom you and everybody loves so much, is one of those impracticable persons who hate, even when ill, to give their fellow-creatures trouble, and have an absurd disinclination to be nursed.'

'That's just so, my dear,' answered the surgeon, chuckling with pride, as a hen chuckles over some promising chick. 'You could not have described him better had you known him all your life.'

'Very well, papa, then I tell you what I mean to do, now I shall have so much idle time on my hands. Among other accomplishments I learned at Madame Boncieux—where there is a school infirmary—I learned to nurse; and I shall just take this ex-maharajah into my own hands, and nurse him myself, without his knowing it.'

UNDER THE SEA.

AMONG the very few Frenchmen that seem capable of understanding England and the English, M. Alphonse Esquiro holds an honourable place. His opinion of us is, on the whole, good, yet by no means enthusiastic; he endeavours to regard us not as enemies of his own people, but only as their rivals in the great work of civilisation. It is easy to see that he has some contempt for our immobility, our incapacity for getting excited about an idea; while, on the other hand, he is ready to acknowledge our superiority in practical matters. Our scientific acquirements evidently excite his admiration, and his account of them—as instanced in various government departments—is singularly graphic. At the same time, he is greatly given to digression. His latest work, entitled *English*

Seamen and Divers, might with greater truth have been entitled *English Seamen and Divers other Matters*. A third of the volume is devoted to a very detailed and interesting account of Greenwich Observatory, and the work carried on therein. He tells how Professor Airy is worried by applications from persons who confuse astronomy with astrology, and demand of the astronomer-royal to have their horoscopes cast, though it is fair to add that they also enclose postage-stamps to repay him for his trouble. But not only does the professor decline to inform young ladies whom they are to marry, or to give advice, drawn from a celestial source, to young men as to their future conduct; he sets himself resolutely against all dealings with the stars which are not of the most practical character. He leaves to other establishments the occupation (so dear to human nature) of discovering spots in the sun; he resists the temptation, so seductive to the astronomer, of observing the figures of the planets, the mysteries of the *nebulae*, the eccentricities of the comets. He refused for the use of his Observatory 'the largest refracting telescope in the world,' lest it should lead him, or any member of his staff, away from their simple path of duty, which is the observation of the Heavenly Bodies, with a view to their influence on Navigation. At the same time, we must not misunderstand this to mean that the highest ends of science are neglected. What is lost in extent is gained in depth and exactness; and 'the delicate observations which are being carried on at Greenwich, on account of the very precision which distinguishes them, serve as the groundwork for the greater part of the speculative views which are taken up as to the system of the universe.'

Out of the thousands of people who yearly go to stare at the 'motor-clock,' set in the Observatory wall, and to wonder at its four-and-twenty hours, not one in a hundred, probably, has any definite idea of the practical advantages conferred by the institution before them. Without it, they have a general notion that we should lose our standards of measurement, and our accurate record of Time, and have to return to barley-corns for the one, and hour-glasses for the other. Yet it is to Greenwich Observatory that every mariner in his trouble turns, as to a faithful friend who will not deceive him. 'The astronomer,' says M. Esquiros, 'watching the celestial movements on the little hill in the park, stretches out over the immensity of the ocean a helping hand to the sailor wandering from his course on the great watery waste, and, as it were, compels the stars to lead him safe to his port. But how can this be the case, and what are the means adopted for finding out the longitude at sea? Let us imagine a vessel at the mercy of the wind at night-time, and near rocks or sandbanks which are supposed to be still far distant. The sky is clouded with gloom, and the pilot has, in fact, lost his way. Suddenly a clear spot breaking between the clouds allows a group of stars and the moon to become visible. The navigator at once consults his *Nautical Almanac*, and then, with the help of instruments and calculations familiar to mariners, he is not long in discovering, by the situation of the stars, what time it is at the spot where his vessel then lies. Next, by comparing this time with that of his chronometer—regulated before his departure by the clock at Greenwich—he easily ascertains his longitude. It is a well-known fact that in these cases the difference in

time gives, by a simple rule, the difference in distance. Confidence is at once restored to the hearts of the sailors, for they now know where they are, and foreseeing its snares, can sail fearlessly over the deep.'

This *Nautical Almanac*, it should be stated, is printed years in advance, for the benefit of those who undertake long voyages; it predicts each day the position of the moon and the planets, and all the celestial phenomena that the seer upon Greenwich Hill foresees will occur, so that when the world is rolled up like a scroll, or swallowed up in fire, there will actually be an accurate record in existence of what would have taken place had it been permitted to continue for years. A curious illustration of the accuracy of astronomical observation was afforded in 1844, with respect to the definition of our North American territory. 'Between Canada and the northern portion of the United States of America there lies an impenetrable region, where dark virgin forests, deep ravines, and dismal marshes have long defied the efforts of the two governments and all the appliances of geodetical science. On account of all these obstacles, the boundaries of the two countries had not been definitely fixed in these regions. In 1843, Lord Canning wrote to the astronomer-royal to call his attention to the subject; and Mr Airy advised him to send to the spot some military engineers, to whom he, Mr Airy, would previously give some useful instructions. In consequence of this advice, some officers of the above corps repaired to Greenwich, whence, after certain preliminary studies, they left for Canada. Two groups of observers, each party being furnished with a telescope, a chronometer, and some other instruments, placed themselves at the two lateral extremities of the wild country which it was their business to divide. By means of calculations, dictated in a great measure by the movements of the celestial orbs, they traced out a boundary-line in conformity with the nature of the treaties which had been signed between England and the United States. The two parties being placed at a great distance from each other, they had no means whatever of coming to any understanding as to the progress of the operations. The studies and calculations being terminated, one of the two groups of engineers advanced slowly through the forest, cutting out a path in a straight line in the direction previously arranged, which they followed on the credit, as it were, of the stars. How great was the astonishment and joy of these gallant geometers when, having cut their way through forty-two miles of brushwood and trees, they perceived from the summit of a hill the goal they had been aiming at! Right in front of them, on another eminence not very far off, they caught sight of a gap cut in the dense and sombre curtain of the woods. This gap became more and more extensive, and soon disclosed to view the other body of engineers approaching from the opposite side of the district. The two lines thus met end to end; the difference between them did not exceed three hundred and forty feet, and this very slight deviation was owing to an error of only one second in the difference of longitude. England and the government at Washington hastened to recognise as the boundary of the two states this line marked out by the authority of the heavens.' It is not to be supposed that the watchers of the stars on Greenwich Hill are scientific Sybærites, who, lying (often at full length)

in the most comfortable of arm-chairs, admire at their leisure the wonders of the Heavens. It is very cold work indeed to be stationed for hours on a winter's night, under an open roof, and with one's eye glued to a telescope; while the patience and microscopic accuracy demanded of these ministers of science are something that ordinarily careful and punctual folks are unable to imagine. Formerly, for observations in the daytime, they had to descend into a dry-well, one hundred feet deep, in order to see the stars, but the progress now made in science renders this unnecessary.

From the Observatory, M. Esquiros ingeniously glides—by way of 'the Admiralty'—to sailors, and from sailors to the diving-bell, whose operations he went to witness at Plymouth breakwater. It was rather disappointing to find that this instrument was not a bell at all, nor in the least like the machine M. Esquiros had seen, and descended in, at the Polytechnic, in Langham Place. It is a box of glass and iron of the shape of a parallelopiped, and capable of accommodating half-a-dozen inmates, of which our author in vain endeavoured to make one. The authorities in charge assured him that he would have a rush of blood to the head, and be deaf for days; and when that argument had no effect upon this heroic man, they told him that a descent would cost twelve pounds—which certainly seems a good deal of money for a 'dip' in the sea. However, he was permitted to watch all the operations. The workmen do not seem to have any particular apparel for their subaqueous duties, which they perform precisely as on land with axe and shovel. A dozen convex lenses, eight or nine inches in diameter, and firmly set in copper frames, receive the rays of the sun spread through the water. In some cases, the *bull's-eyes* are protected externally by iron lattice-work against the blows which they might suffer from the rocks or other solid matters which are occasionally met with in the sea. The light which is thus shed into the interior of the bell varies, however, very considerably in colour and intensity, according to the state of the ocean and the depth to which they have sunk. In places where the water is troubled by sand, the diver often passes through a kind of twilight or submarine fog, which compels him to light his lamp. More often, on the contrary, the light is sufficiently strong to enable one to read a newspaper printed in small type. A story even is told of a lady who wrote a letter in the diving-bell, and dated it thus: "16th June 18—." At the bottom of the sea." Her courage obtained for her among the divers the *sobriquet* of the Diving-Belle.

As for the prime necessity, air, that is supplied by an air-pump, which four men keep in motion, the element passing through a leathern pipe, which resembles a boa-constrictor unwinding its coils, into an orifice in the roof of the bell. The submerged workmen have various methods of communication by signals. They generally make use of a hammer hung by a cord to the dome of the bell, and this hammer plays an important part in the mysterious language of these submarine messages. No noise coming from the surface of the water can reach the ears of the divers; but, on the contrary, sounds ascending from the diving-bell are distinctly heard by those whose duty it is to listen for them in the open air. A particular sense is attached to the number of blows struck by the hammer on the resounding sides of the bell.

Thus, a single blow means "more air," or "pump faster;" two blows signify "hold hard;" three, "hoist away;" four, "lower down;" &c. It is easy to see that something of a system has ruled in the formation of this telegraphic language, and that the orders which they are compelled to give the most frequently are transmitted by the smallest number of blows. They also avail themselves of other means of making signals; for instance, by the help of small buoys which they send up to the surface of the water. On some occasions, they even exchange messages by means of a cord, one end of which is fastened inside the bell, and the other to the vessel up above. The workmen down below write what they wish, either with pen and ink on a morsel of paper, or with chalk on a piece of plank, and send this communication up to the surface.

When the bell reaches the bottom, its inmates jump off their seat, and begin to dig into the moist sand to get out the stones: sometimes the water is muddy, but generally it is so transparent that even the passage of a cloud in the sky is visible at the bottom of the sea. The bell can be moved at will, by signal, through means of 'a traveller' on four wheels, running over two tramways, north, south, east, and west. Curiously enough, these workmen, who labour half their time under water, and half on the great causeway which they have helped to construct, are not paid higher than mere landmen; sometimes by the piece, sometimes by the day, but in neither case do their wages average more than twenty-five shillings a week; and then they have their dead season, when the swell is so violent that they cannot go down into the bell. Notwithstanding the comparatively modern character of the trade, these divers have already their legends. One of them, which they delight to tell to their children, perhaps themselves to be amphibious labourers, is as follows.

'Jack (for this is the name given to a diver who lived "once upon a time") had been busy for some weeks in gathering up the relics of a shipwreck, when one day he saw appear at one of the windows of the bell the pale face of a woman, with long hair intertwined with seaweed. He had often heard tell of the beauty of mermaids, who are, as every one knows, lovelier than the most lovely of women; but Jack never believed that any creature so perfect as this could have existed. With a voice softer than the murmuring of the waves under a gentle breeze, she said to him: "I am one of the spirits of the sea. On account of your kind disposition, I have marked you out among the rest of your companions, and I will protect you, but on one condition only, which is, that you shall be sure and recognise me under any and every shape into which I may be pleased to change myself." The vision disappeared, and Jack remained very much surprised, but with a strong feeling of joy in his heart's core.

'From this moment, everything succeeded with him. Where other divers gained one crown, he gained three. Recollecting what the siren had told him, he took the utmost care to treat with kindness every inhabitant of the sea. When the bell went down into the water like a hollow column, he used to see distinctly a little below his feet the fish and other marine creatures; but he took pains never to frighten them away. More than once, when the bell was ascending to the surface, and the warm vapour covered with a mist the loopholes of his prison, he looked, but looked

in vain, for the vision of the *Lady of the Sea*, for he longed very much to see her again. But she never shewed herself to him any more.

'Nevertheless, everything went on prospering with him. His wife and children began to believe that it was owing to the dried sealskin he wore under his clothes, and that this brought him luck. He had not dared, in fact, to mention to them about this sea green-eyed mistress of his who watched so carefully over him. One day, however, he worked several hours in succession without finding anything of value. The ground-swell obscured the light in the interior of the bell, and prevented him from discerning the objects around him. As he was returning home in rather an ill-humour, he came upon a frightful polypus that the ebbing tide had left lying on the sand. Jack, forgetting his habits of kindness to all the denizens of the sea, crushed it with his foot, and went home to eat his supper. The next day, soon after he had reached the bottom of the sea, what was his terror to see through the glass window of the bell, not the attractive face of the mermaid, but a monstrous shark! The creature approached almost close to the face of the diver, and said to him: "You have disobeyed me, and must therefore die." In fact, some days afterwards, an accident happened to the machine, and Jack was drowned.'

Thus the divers have not only got their tale, but the moral to adorn it: 'Never to mix their pleasure or their pride with sorrow to the meanest thing that feels.'

Of course, so indefatigable a sight-seer and explorer as M. Esquiros was not going to put up with not being suffered to go under water; there are as good divers in the sea elsewhere as are to be found at Plymouth; and off to Whitstable went he in search of a marine experience. Here he met with John Gann, the famous contractor-diver, who undertakes works below the waves, and has had many a sturdy triton in his employ. His fishing up one hundred thousand pounds from the *Lady Charlotte*, was perhaps his greatest coup. On the coast of Ireland, too, where some Whitstable men were employed, there were got out of a sunk Spanish vessel barrels of dollars, which, though the wood-work had gone, still retained the barrel form, so that the coins were gathered in lumps like figs; and a row of houses built with the proceeds at Whitstable bears the name of Dollar Row.

Of course, these divers use the apparatus—helmet, waterproof, &c.; and hearing that some of Mr Gann's men were working at Dover, M. Esquiros hurried thither, resolved to wear that all-attractive uniform. He found his men in a ship moored at sea, from which they descended and to which they returned as to head-quarters. On a platform stood the air-pumps, with the men appointed to work them, and who are forbidden to exchange a word with anybody, or with one another, while the men, whose lives are dependent on their attention, are under water.

He watched the professional divers go about their weird business, descending into and ascending from the deep, and his soul was fired with the desire to do likewise. 'I asked the divers whether, being already so far advanced on the road, I might not attempt to descend to the bottom of the Channel in good earnest. They stared at me with wondering eyes, in which I fancied I read a feeling of doubt and anxiety. "At all events," said one of them, "he can do as he likes."'

M. Esquiros did not in reality much like it, though he was resolved to go through with it. It is one thing to feel confident that two reliable men do watch over you when under water, just as a nurse does over a child walking with 'leading-strings,' but it is another to test it—to actually intrust yourself at the bottom of the sea to their kind attentions. However, being properly encased, he actually ventured upon the experiment, with no very satisfactory result. He got to the bottom of the ladder, and even set his feet upon the floor of ocean, but he held tightly on with his hands to the friendly staircase; for the fact is, he was half-suffocated and wholly frightened—as indeed most of us would be. Wishing, however, to carry back with him a tangible proof of where he had been, and a *souvenir* of his adventure, M. Esquiros stooped down and picked up a pebble from the bottom of the sea, and was going to put it into his pocket, when he suddenly discovered that he had none. If it was kittle kattle coming down, it was 'the deil and a' getting up again; and his dress, when he endeavoured to disrobe, stuck to him like a limpet.

This diving apparatus, however, when one gets accustomed to it, is much more useful, and more extensively used than the more cumbersome Bell. The hull of a ship at sea often receives damage which can be repaired by this means, and thus the *Great Eastern* was once preserved from possible destruction, on its way across the Atlantic. So conscious, indeed, is the government of the advantage of the apparatus, that a certain number of the sailors in the fleet are now trained to the use of it. It also rectifies much that goes wrong in mines. It is well known that the operations for raising the remains of the *Royal George* at Spithead were carried on in this manner; but although a thousand persons perished in that shipwreck, very little money was found, and only twenty-three out of the one hundred and four guns were recovered. During this work, 'two soldiers of the Royal Engineers, who had for a time exchanged their military garb for the uniform and helmet of the diver, began quarrelling, when at the bottom of the sea, as to the right of ownership in some of the remains. As they were both working at the same part of the wrecked ship, the question was, who should be the master in that particular locality, and who should appropriate the spoil. A fight ensued, during which one of the divers struck his adversary with his fist on the visor of his helmet, and thus broke the glass. He was at once obliged to go up to the surface, and the other laid violent hands on the booty.'

When a ship has sunk, the great marine insurance companies, such as Lloyd's, employ their own divers, and when they have done their best, sell the 'gleanings' of the salvage to speculators. Thus, the relics of the *Royal Charter* were disposed of for one thousand pounds; after which a bar of pure gold, weighing nine and a half pounds, was brought up, besides a box containing three thousand pounds.

In a steamer sunk off Lundy Island, destined to run the American blockade, in 1865, some very costly machinery was sunk; and an engineer, named M'Duff, went down in the apparatus—forty-two feet under water—and brought the whole of it up, piece by piece. Perhaps Victor Hugo may possibly have taken one of the most striking scenes in his *Toilers of the Sea* from that surprising feat.

From the *Malabar*, which went down in 1860, and remained at the bottom of the sea untouched for months, the whole amount of the great treasure it carried—two hundred and eighty thousand pounds—was similarly recovered.

Thus, the poet's phrase of 'the deep's untrodden floor' has no longer any application. It often presents an animated spectacle to the helmeted intruder. 'At the bottom of the sea, just as on its surface, there is a horizon by which the visual rays are limited, but the submarine horizon is, of course, much more confined in its extent than the other. Within the narrow circle which is embraced by the sight, all kinds of animated forms appear from time to time, like ships under sail on the upper horizon—very often it may be a shoal of small fish, which are swimming for their lives to escape from the pursuit of one of the devouring ogres of the ocean. On the contrary, when all is quiet, the fish, attracted no doubt by the metallic glitter, come and swim round the head of the diver like a flight of small birds, and will even imprint a kiss with their mouths on the outside of the helmet. Some of them will occasionally take more audacious liberties with their strange visitor: not long ago, a diver was bitten in the shoulder by a dog-fish.'

The Prussian engineer, M. Euber, with a companion, had once to take refuge within the shattered timbers of a submerged wreck, from the attentions of a shark, which swam round and round them with an astonished air.

The diver who has made his business in the deepest waters yet explored has only descended one hundred and sixty-five feet: this was in the Mediterranean; and he was obliged to load his belt with balls of lead, and to return to the surface every twenty-five minutes. 'One hundred and sixty-five feet! Certainly it seems a great depth; but when we hear of twenty-five thousand feet of water in certain parts of the Atlantic, it is enough to make one give up the contest in despair. Beyond forty or forty-two metres down, the light begins sensibly to diminish. Can there be a point where light ceases to exist? There is, I think, every reason to conclude so.'

DAISY'S CHOICE.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.

MR VIVIAN was lounging by the surgery-window, in no very good temper. He had been watching for Daisy, and she had not appeared, and that provoked him; and besides, the doctor had been away for an unconscionably long time, making his country rounds, and Vivian had been left to his own resources. In truth, he had one of those irritable tempers which are apt to accompany poetic genius, and he was easily put out of sorts. His grievances at present were not many, inasmuch as he was left sole occupant of a snug room, well furnished with books, and was at liberty, if he felt so disposed, to take his fishing-rod, and stroll down to the river. But he was in a grumbling mood, and disinclined to go out; so he sat at the window, grumbling at Daisy for staying in the house, at the doctor for attending to his own business, at the sun for shining into the room, at the flies for buzzing, and at the whole course of things in general.

Presently, the sound of a horse trotting down

the street was audible, and the doctor came in, mud-stained—for the roads were soft—but cheerful.

'What! are you here still, Vivian? I thought I should find you somewhere by the river.'

'What a time you have been!' said Vivian discontentedly.

'I am sorry you have wearied. You see I must attend to my patients, even though it involves leaving you so much alone.'

'O yes, I know; only I wouldn't be such a slave as you are to these country bores, not for ten times the money.'

The doctor opened his grave eyes wide for an instant. It struck him, as he looked at the peevish face before him, that there was a worse bondage than that of honest work—a bondage to one's own whims, and fancies, and evil tempers. But his profession had, among other things, taught him reticence, so he wisely held his tongue. He went to the window, and laid his cool hand on Vivian's brow. It was drawn away, very much after the manner of a petted child.

'I think you are not quite well,' he said kindly. 'I notice that people always take gloomy views of things when they are dyspeptic.'

'Nonsense,' said Vivian, looking grievously insulted.

'Truth,' answered the doctor smiling, and going across to his big press, where he began to pour things that 'fizzed' into tumblers. 'Drink this,' he said rather peremptorily, returning to Vivian.

That gentleman pshawed contemptuously, but obeyed. 'It is not so bad,' he acknowledged.

The doctor left the room, to change his muddy attire; and on returning, he found that the whole expression of Vivian's face and position had altered. He had drawn back behind the curtain, and was watching earnestly, intently, with a curiously pleased look in his dark eyes, a figure in a blue morning-dress, that was moving about the garden. Daisy had come out to gather a bouquet for her drawing-room, and, unconscious of being looked at, she was daintily putting one bit of bright colour to another, pausing every now and then to study the effect.

It was a pretty picture to look at; but in Vivian's face there was an expression which meant something more than even pleased admiration. The doctor glanced at him, and then walked quickly across the room, and stood for a few minutes with his back to him, leaning his arm on the mantelpiece, and looking absently down into the empty fireplace. Vivian hardly noticed him. He went on watching Daisy for a little while, till suddenly turning from the window, he moved towards the door.

'Where are you going?' asked the doctor, turning round to look at him.

'Into the garden. Miss Barton is there.'

'Will you wait for a few minutes? I have something to say to you.'

Vivian looked annoyed. 'Will it not keep till another time? I want to go out now.'

'I would prefer saying it now, if you will allow me,' said the doctor. He spoke very gently, but gravely, and he was rather paler than usual.

Vivian came back unwillingly, and threw himself into an arm-chair on the side of the fireplace opposite to the doctor. 'I wish you would be quick, then,' he said discontentedly. 'Miss Barton will be gone presently.'

The doctor resumed his former attitude, leaning

on the mantelpiece, and looking into the empty grate, which was filled by no pretty device, as it would have been if a lady had lived in the house, but shewed plainly all its bare desolation. 'It is about her that I wish to speak,' he said.

'Miss Barton?' asked Vivian suddenly interested.

'Yes. I ought—I feel now that I ought to have told you before. She has been engaged to me for some time.'

Vivian had been lounging back in his chair, in one of his usual careless attitudes; now he suddenly sat upright, and stared at the doctor with flushing cheeks.

'To you!' he said in a low voice. 'That beautiful young girl engaged to marry you?'

There was something almost insulting in the way he said it; but the doctor kept very quiet. He only bowed slightly.

'And why,' Vivian went on, getting angry, 'have you not told me this sooner? I have been here a fortnight, and you have seen that I have been much with her. You ought to have told me; it was not fair.'

'Perhaps I ought. I did not think it necessary. I may have been wrong.'

Vivian rose, and walked excitedly up and down the room. Daisy was still in the garden, but he no longer looked at her.

'Carleton,' he said at last, 'you must excuse me if I say that you have not behaved well to me. And besides—really, I think that if you mean to marry Daisy—Miss Barton, I mean—you were not wise to let her see so much of me.'

There was something in this cool assumption of superiority which nettled the doctor, little as he was given to thinking much of himself. He lifted his head rather proudly. 'I trusted her,' he said.

'And you thought me of no consequence,' retorted Vivian.

This reproach was deserved, and the doctor said nothing.

'But, to tell the truth,' Vivian went on, 'I am thinking less of myself than of her. Poor little pretty thing!'

The doctor looked at him. 'Do you mean,' he said, speaking sharply, 'that you think she will not be happy with me?'

Vivian was silent. He was treading on delicate ground, and he knew it.

'Answer me,' said the doctor. 'I know you think so. Tell me why?'

'Because,' said Vivian slowly, 'during this fortnight, while I have been so much with her—your own doing, remember'—

'I know. Go on.'

'I have seen that she has thoughts, fancies, aspirations, which you could not possibly understand—that she leads quite a different inner life from yours.'

'And you think that you understand her?' asked the doctor calmly.

Vivian looked at him, and made a great mistake; he mistook perfect self-command for indifference. 'I do,' he said boldly. 'And she understands me, as very few have ever been able to do.'

He walked up and down the room again, and came to a stand-still just in front of the doctor. 'Carleton,' he said, 'have you not taken an unfair advantage of that child?'

He did not know how very near the doctor was to knocking him down at that moment. He could

easily have done it if he had tried; perhaps that very fact deterred him. 'What do you mean?' he asked, without losing his outward calm.

'It is evident that you have been much with her since her childhood. You have shewn her kindness, no doubt, as you could hardly help doing in the circumstances. She can have seen very little society in this out-of-the-way place: even if she had been inclined to fall in love with any one else, there was no one in the way to be fallen in love with. You, who have been much with her—to whom she is accustomed, and to whom she perhaps feels bound by a tie of gratitude—you watch her growing up to womanhood—and naturally, when the flower has bloomed, you want to pluck it. And she—well, I can hardly speak confidently of what her feelings may be.'

'Tell me what you think they are,' said the doctor.

Vivian had been speaking warmly; now he hesitated. 'I think—that I could hardly have been with her so much, without finding out that she loved you, if such were really the case.'

The doctor leaned rather more heavily against the chimney-piece, but said nothing. He was silent so long, that Vivian went back to the window, and looked out into the garden. It was empty now, for Daisy had gone into the house, and he rested his arms on the window-sill, and looked at some tall white lilies, of the kind that are often painted in the hands of angels.

The doctor broke the silence first. 'Vivian, what are your feelings towards Daisy?'

Now, Vivian had hardly made up his mind about that. He did not want the doctor to have her, but he had not thought of marrying this little country girl himself. But he had begun a game, and it was necessary to play boldly. 'I love her,' he said in a low voice, and in so saying he did not lie.

'And if you could—if I did not stand in the way'—

'I would win her.' This perhaps was not so true.

There was another long silence. What Vivian had said was nothing new to the doctor; he had thought it often enough, in a vague way, and had been troubled about it, and now that it had been put into words for him, he felt it very bitterly.

When he spoke again, it was in a hard, dry tone. 'Vivian, you are right. I have been unfair, and she is too good for me. I love her, God knows I do. I love her so, that if she would be happier with you than with me, I'll give her up, and say: "God bless you both."'

Vivian had not expected this, and he turned in astonishment. 'Do you mean what you say?' he asked.

'Yes. If it is as you say; if she does not love me—and there's very little in me for her to love—and if you can win her love, do it. Perhaps,' he added, with the first touch of bitterness in his tone, 'perhaps you have won it already.'

Vivian did not answer. He was taken aback by the suddenness of his victory. The doctor went slowly out of the room, but if Vivian could have seen his face he would have been startled, for it was ashy gray, like that of a man in deadly trouble.

Vivian went out, not to see Daisy, but across the old bridge, and away by the path up the river-side among the willows. 'He was very cool about it,' he thought. 'A thick-headed fellow like that doesn't feel things very acutely, I suppose. And now—how shall I play out the game? Make her

love me? Of course, that is easy enough. It is rather an exciting game to play, the winning her from him. I will do it.' And he turned homeward, and spent the evening in Daisy's drawing-room, while the doctor was miles away, galloping across the country to see a dying woman.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr Vivian was not a good man, but he was something of a gentleman. Not a gentleman in the highest and noblest sense of the word, for there are those who can trace their pedigree back to the time of William the Conqueror who have yet no true title to that grand old name. But he had certain ideas of honour, though those were not according to the highest standard; and though his conscience allowed him to use all means of winning Daisy's affections from the doctor, it revolted against doing so while he staid under the doctor's roof. He lingered there for a few more days of idle sauntering out into Daisy's garden, or down by the river-side; but before the third week of his visit had closed, he declared it to be necessary for him to return to London. The doctor did not press him to continue his visit. Since that one conversation, he had never mentioned Daisy's name to Vivian, and, indeed, had seen little of him, except when sitting down to the same table. It happened that there was a good deal of sickness during that long bright summer, both in Thornregis and in the surrounding country, and the doctor was more than usually busy. He used to come in, tired and dusty, from a long day's visiting and cantering over the breezy uplands, and through the deep woody lanes; and going across to Mr Barton's, would find Daisy seated in her shady arbour, where she could hear the perpetual murmur of the river, and smell the scents of her roses and stocks, listening to Vivian's musical voice as he read Tennyson's *Idylls* or Longfellow's *Golden Legend*. Or they would be in the drawing-room, where Vivian generally sat at the piano, talking by fits and starts, and every now and then letting his fingers wander over the keys in some low dreamy melody, or singing those wonderful thrilling notes of his, while Daisy listened in a sort of trance.

The doctor knew she was drifting away from him, and that he was powerless to bring her back. He felt, more than ever he had done before, the difference between her dreamy poetical girlhood and his practical middle age; and he doubted whether, even if he had the power, he would have had matters as they had been before. And yet he had never loved her more devotedly than now, when he seemed about to lose her. As yet he had spoken no word to her of any change in their lives; she was still his treasure, and he would not give her up till she compelled him to do so, by telling him that she could not be happy with him. And his manner had hardly altered towards her; there had always been in it more of grave, fatherly tenderness than of lover-like passion, and if she had cared to notice, she would have seen that he was even more gravely tender than of old.

At the end of a week, Vivian went back to London. 'You need not be surprised to see me back again,' he said to the doctor, who was too honest to say that he would be glad to see him, but confessed that he would not feel any surprise.

And in another month he did come back, taking

up his quarters at the modest little hotel in the High Street, from which he could look across the Drew to the open country and blue sea-line behind. And all through hot July, and August, and September, and cool, brown-tinted October, he staid there, spending long days with his book and fishing-rod beside the Drew, and sending many baskets of silvery trout for Mr Barton's breakfast. He had come to be regarded as a familiar friend in the old gray house—one whose frequent and unceremonious comings and goings were to be looked for; and this easy, friendly footing was of all others the one which the doctor had most cause to dread. People said that the doctor looked graver and paler during that summer than he had ever done before; he worked harder, too, grudging no labour or sleepless nights, or long rides to visit patients who he knew could never pay him in this world, except by their blessings.

In autumn, Vivian again went to London for a few weeks, and when he came back to the quiet Thornregis hotel, it was close upon Christmas. He had made acquaintance with most of the little circle of village society, and on his return, he found an invitation waiting for him to a party at the Rectory on Christmas Eve. The Rectory was a great rambling house, standing nearly opposite Mr Barton's, behind a hedge of clipped box. Mr and Mrs Cornwall were easy-going, popular people, who did a great deal of good in their own quiet way, and were held in great respect and liking by all Thornregis. They had no children, and Mrs Cornwall had a motherly love for Daisy, so that Mr Vivian was sure of meeting her there, and was glad to accept the invitation.

Christmas Eve was a fine mild night; no snow had yet fallen, and there had been little hard frost, so the grass was yet green, and the chrysanthemums were still rich in purple and yellow blossoms. The party at the Rectory was a very pleasant one; all the young people available in Thornregis were there, and there was no lack of the soft, fair, girlish beauty which is our English pride. But it was evident that Daisy, in her floating white lace robes, and wreath of holly leaves and berries, was the queen; and Vivian's dark eyes lighted up with pride and admiration as he looked at her.

They had been playing games, such as old-fashioned people like to keep up on Christmas Eve, and Daisy had entered into them with almost childish gaiety. Vivian had rather hung back; he had an intense dislike of doing anything undignified; and after a noisy game at the 'Post,' he managed to get near enough to whisper: 'This room is getting so hot; do come out into the hall, and get cool.'

She smilingly agreed, and in another minute they were pacing up and down the wide old lobby together. The night was so mild that the front-door stood open, and they stepped out into the porch. Vivian snatched up a light shawl which some one had left lying in the hall, and put it round Daisy's shoulders.

'What a lovely night!' he said. 'Look how glorious Orion is.' He drew her out into the star-lit garden, where they could hear the gay voices and laughter from within, and they walked slowly across the broad gravel-walk, to where a drooping beech-tree formed a sort of natural arbour. It was bare and leafless now, but the night was so still, that, as they stood beneath its shelter, they felt no breath of wind. They looked at the stars, which

were singularly clear and brilliant, and tried to find out the constellations, and then between them fell one of those silences which are very dangerous to such a couple out together and alone on a starlight night. Daisy's little white gloved hand rested on Vivian's arm, and her face appeared ethereal in the dim light. Vivian looked at it, and determined to speak. 'Daisy,' he said suddenly, 'you are very beautiful.'

She gave him a startled look. 'Oh, please, hush!'

'Why? I have been silent long enough; I must speak now. You can't help knowing that I love you, Daisy.'

She drew her hand from his arm, and he saw, even by the starlight, that she grew paler. 'You must not speak to me so, Mr Vivian. If you love me, I am very sorry; yet I can hardly believe it possible, for you must have known all this time that I belonged to another.'

'You are right. I did know it.'

'Then, knowing that,' she said with quiet dignity, 'there should have been no words of this kind between you and me.'

She would have left him, but he caught her hand. 'Daisy, you must not leave me; you must hear me speak this once. Even knowing of your engagement, it was impossible that I should help loving you. How could I help seeing that you would be wasted on a man like him—one whose thoughts rise no higher than the ailments of country boors.'

'I will not hear this,' she cried, trying to get her hand away from him.

'You must hear it,' he answered passionately; 'you must hear the truth this once, and then, if you will, you can sacrifice yourself to him. You do not love him, Daisy—not as you might love me. Think how much older he is—how utterly different his whole sphere of thought and feeling. My darling, you would be miserable, tied to a man like that.'

Daisy leaned against the tree, and covered her eyes with her free hand. 'He is a very good man,' she said; 'the best man I have ever known.'

'Good!' he exclaimed scornfully. 'And what will his tame goodness do for you? Will it satisfy the cravings of your nature for deeper things than he knows of? Will it fill your heart and life enough to make you happy? Think what it will be to drag on year after year here, in this dreary place, for it is dreary, but for you. Think what it will be to have no change in your life, always the same monotonous round of faces, and things, and ideas. Think how you may become narrowed down to it yourself, and grow into something different from what you are now, my bright high-souled darling.'

Still she leaned there silently, keeping her eyes covered, listening to the voice of the tempter, but not yet carried away by it. Her instincts were higher than his, poet though he was; she had a dim idea that this goodness which he scorned was really the highest thing in the world; moreover, she knew right from wrong, which he did not.

'And I love you so,' he pleaded. 'What is his love to mine?'

'No; don't say that,' she said, uncovering her eyes, and looking at him. 'His love is the growth of many years; yours, of a single summer. He does love me; I know it.'

There was a pause: the voices and music from

the Rectory came floating across the garden to them, sounding near, and yet strangely far away, they were so completely out of it all. Vivian was not the man to be too scrupulous about his assertions when he had a point to gain, so he said, after that minute's hesitation: 'I believe you are mistaken; I do not believe he loves you. If he had done so, he would not have been so ready to give you up.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that, when he told me some time ago of your engagement to him, he spoke in such a way as to make me understand that he was not very anxious about its being fulfilled.'

Daisy had been leaning against the stem of the beech-tree; now she drew herself up, proud and straight, and Vivian saw that her pride was touched. She looked away from him silently, at the lighted windows in front of them, and he could hardly understand the wistful look on her face. 'I can hardly understand that,' she said at last, speaking very low. 'He has always been so very kind to me. And, Mr Vivian, if he does love me, I will be true to him; I can be true in heart and soul, in spite of all you have said.'

'I do not believe he is true to you, in the way you mean.'

Unfortunately for Vivian, another person besides Daisy had heard the last sentence. The doctor had been detained by some patients from joining Mrs Cornwall's party till far on in the evening, and being a privileged person, whom no one expected to come at fixed hours like other people, he had as usual just come when he was able. The gate to the road had been left open, and on coming in he had heard the voices of Vivian and Daisy, without their hearing him. He felt angry with Vivian for keeping her standing out in the night-air, which, however mild, was apt to be treacherous in its effects, and acting promptly, as he was in the habit of doing, without giving much heed to what people might think of him or his doings, he crossed the grass sward to bring her in. His steps were not very audible on the turf, and he was close to the beech-tree before either of those under it were aware of his presence; and so it happened that he heard Vivian's words: 'I do not believe he is true to you.'

In another instant he was standing before them.

'What is he saying to you, Daisy?' he asked.

She came close to him, and laid both her clasped hands on his breast. 'Oh, doctor, he says that you don't care for me—that you would give me up.'

'The first of those assertions is untrue,' said the doctor, speaking quietly and sadly. 'As for the other, my little Daisy, I would rather see you happy than be happy myself. I fear I've been a selfish old fellow, thinking more of my own pleasure than of yours. I've been feeling more than ever lately the difference between us; I fear you would not be happy as my wife; I'm too old, too common-place for you.'

He nearly broke down; but he was so certain that she was glad to be free, that he tried to speak cheerfully. 'I daresay it was all a mistake, Daisy. Think of me as a foolish old fellow, nearly old enough to be your father, who dreamed in his folly that you might be something nearer to him than only a dear little friend. Forget about that foolish dream of mine, Daisy, and go and be happy with the man you love.'

She had never moved, but stood with her hands clasped on his breast, looking up eagerly into his

face. 'Say you don't love me, then,' she said. 'Say just once: "Daisy, I don't love you any more."'

He was silent, and she saw his lips tremble. 'Say it,' she urged. 'If it is true, you will say it.'

He put her gently away from him. 'I cannot,' he said hoarsely, 'for it is not true.' Without another word, he walked away from them towards the house; but half-way across the grass, he turned and came back. 'I meant to ask you,' he said, addressing Vivian for the first time, 'not to keep her longer out in the night-air. She is not very strong, and needs to be taken care of.'

Curiously enough, this little bit of care-taking, such as she had received from him ever since her fragile, motherless childhood, touched Daisy more than anything had ever done in her life before. Quite a new sensation, such as she had never before felt for the doctor, never at all for the fascinating young poet, stole into her heart, and made it thrill and tremble. She hardly knew what it was; she only thought, 'He could not say that he didn't love me;' and silently she put her little cold hand into his, and went back with him to the house, leaving Vivian to follow, a little sulkily, but by no means despairing. The notion of his taking the trouble of being the rival of a stupid village doctor, and failing, was not to be thought of.

In the drawing-room, dancing had begun; and when Daisy went and sat down in a corner of the sofa, away from both her lovers, Mrs Cornwall came and remonstrated with her for sitting still. 'I shall think you are not enjoying my little party,' said the good lady, 'if you sit moping there in a corner, when every one else is dancing.'

'But no one has asked me,' answered Daisy, trying to laugh; and then Vivian presented himself, with an imploring look, and she was obliged to dance with him.

'I know there is no use in asking you, doctor,' said Mrs Cornwall; 'we have long given up hopes of your ever becoming a dancing man.'

'No,' he answered, smiling a little sadly; 'I must be content to be one of the old people, and look on while the young ones are happy.'

He was watching Vivian and Daisy as he spoke, and his quick practical eye noticed that the skirts of her white lace dress fluttered perilously near the fireplace every time that they whirled past. 'Excuse me, Mrs Cornwall, but have you no guard that you could put before the fire? The ladies' dresses are in some peril, I think.'

Mrs Cornwall protested she had been very stupid not to think of it sooner, and went out of the room to look for one, while the doctor watched anxiously every time that Daisy swept past the fire. Some one called off his attention for a minute, and then he heard a cry. What he had been fearing had happened; Daisy's lace robe had been swept against the ribs of the grate—the dry, light material caught like tinder, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the flames had spread to the muslin petticoat beneath.

Vivian was not exactly a coward, but physical courage was not one of his strong points, and his first impulse, on discovering that the lady he was dancing with was in flames, was to let her go, and start back. I think that he would probably have recovered his presence of mind, and tried to save her, had time been given him; but before any other action was possible, the doctor had pulled from the sofa a gaily striped Afghan, and had wrapped it round Daisy, crushing out the flames with that

and with his hands, regardless of the burns he received in the process. The room was all in confusion: some one pulled the cover off a table, pulling down the ornaments on the floor with a crash; and some were screaming for water, and running for Mrs Cornwall. She came, poor lady, crying and wringing her hands, and met the doctor carrying poor unconscious Daisy down-stairs.

'Oh, won't you bring her to my room?' sobbed Mrs Cornwall. 'There's a bed there, quite ready for her. Dear doctor, do let her stay here.'

But he shook his head. Her father's house was only a couple of hundred yards away, and he knew it would be better for her to be there. He carried her out into the starlit garden, from which he had led her in only half an hour before; and holding her as if she had been a baby, he bore her down the village street, and into her father's house; there he laid her on her own little, white-curtained bed, and proceeded to cut off the charred garments from her poor scorched limbs.

And for many weeks, he came and went, spending hours both of day and night in that darkened room, where Daisy moaned faintly in pain.

THE CHESTNUT WALK:

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LINGER, my spirit, in the chestnut walk,
If anywhere on earth thou lingerest;
The place is dear for no fond-hearted talk,
No college comrade, but for lonely rest.

There on the bench, within a spreading tent
Of chestnut foliage, have I reclined;
There in pure quiet hath my soul unbent,
And thoughts like summer airs refreshed my mind.

And there the beauty of 'the Rylstone Doe'
Before me passed, and fed me with delight;
And in my thoughts the poet's thoughts would blow
Like roses sweet and delicate and white.

The rippling light upon the leafy boughs
That hung in graceful fall above the stream;
The walk's soft shadow, growing, like repose
O'er a sweet face, the avenue's day-dream;

The bridge, where men have leaned, as youths, whose
deeds

Make history sparkle, and whose clear pure thought
Is fresh as summer waves, or new-mown meads,
Though long ago they paced our cloister court;

The chapel bell, or music's distant voice,
Or white flocks bleating down the road beyond;
And many sights that made my eye rejoice,
And many sounds of which my ear is fond:

These things remain; though flitting, they remain,
Like forms upon the stream, most clear in calm;
Like hues in pearl, they live within the brain,
To perish only when that meets with harm.

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